

Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTO 03101

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, PINT, CG, FR, US
SUBJECT: UNDER SECRETARY HABIB'S DISCUSSION OF ZAIRE WITH ELYSEE
ADVISER

REF: PARIS 8947 (NOTAL)

SUMMARYC DURING APRIL 1 DISCUSSION, GISCARD'S DEY AFRICAN
ADVISER (JOURNIAC) DESCRIBED TO UNDER SECRETARY HABIB THE
FRENCH VIEW OF THE SITUATION IN SHABA AND ITS FAR-REACHING
POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR AFRICA. HE UNDERScoreD THE IM-
0945-NCE FOR WESTERN INTERESTS OF MAINTAINING MOBUTU IN
POWER, AN ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS WHICH HABIB INDICATED THE
U.S. SHARES. THE FRENCH ARE RESPONDING TO MOBUTU'S REQUEST
FOR HELP WITH MERCENARIES AND HOPE TO RECRUIT ABOUT 100. A
NUMBER THE BELGIANS ALSO MAY PROVIDE. IN ADDITION, THE
FRENCH WILL URGE MODERATE AFRICAN STATES TO PROVIDE SMALL
CONTINGENTS, AND THINK THE MOROCCANS ARE DISPOSED TO DO
SO. IN REPLY TO JOURNIAC'S SUGGESTIONS, HABIB SAID
THAT WE PROBABLY COULD SUPPLY ADDITIONAL RATIONS, THAT HE
WOULD LOOK INTO THE MATTER OF PROVIDING A C-130, BUT THAT
ARMS AND HELICOPTERS WERE OUT AND US WOULD HAVE NOTHING
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TO DO WITH MERCENARIES. JOURNIAC APPEARED TO COMPREHEND
THAT THE US WOULD NOT TAKE THE LEAD, BUT WOULD BE
PREPARED TO FOLLOW IN FRANCE'S (AND BELGIUM'S) FOOTSTEPS
AS FEASIBLE. INDICATIVE OF FRANCE'S CONCERN ABOUT ZAIRE,
GISCARD INTENDS TO RAISE THE MATTER FORCEFULLY WITH THE
SECRETARY, JOURNIAC SAID. END SUMMARY.
1. IN RESPONSE TO HABIB'S REQUEST, PRESIDENTIAL AFRICAN

AFFAIRS ADVISER RENE JOURNIAC GAVE A SUCCINCT ANALYSIS OF FRENCH VIEWS ON THE ZAIRE SITUATION AS OPENER TO AN 80-MINUTE DISCUSSION. SAYING IT IS DIFFICULT TO KNOW EXACTLY WHAT IS TAKING PLACE, JOURNIAC DESCRIBED THE GUEERILLA NATURE OF THE KATANGESE ATTACK, NOTED THAT THE ZAIRIAN ARMY'S ONLY ENGAGEMENTS HAD BEEN THE RESULT OF AMBUSHES AND THAT NOT A SINGLE PRISONER HAD YET BEEN TAKEN AND STRESSED FAZ UNWILLINGNESS AND INCAPACITY TO FIGHT. HE SAID THERE WAS NO DOUBT THAT ANGOLA WAS SUPPORTING THE INVASION, AND WAS BACKED IN TURN BY THE SOVIETS AND THE CUBANS.

2. DURING HIS VISIT TO KINSHASA LAST WEEK, JOURNIAC FOUND MOBUTU HARBORING NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT HIS ARMY, BUT LUCID AND CALM. HE AT FIRST WANTED MASSIVE AIR SUPPORT TO FILL THE GAP, BUT AFTER JOURNIAC'S EXPRESSION OF DOUBT THAT SUCH AN OPERATION WOULD BE EFFECTIVE AGAINST SMALL GROUPS OF KATANGESE, SHIFTED TO A REQUEST FOR MERCENARIES. THE FRENCH CONCUR THAT THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO HEOP WOULD BE TO PUT SOME TRAINED MEN ON THE SPOT. MOBUTU WANTED 500 MEN AND SAID THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS HAD TURNED DOWN HIS REQUEST FOR HELP. JOURNIAC THOUGHT THE FRENCH WOULD BE ABLE TO ROUND UP AT LEAST ABOUT 100 MERCENARIES AND SOME RETIRED FRENCH OFFICERS TO ENCADRE THEM. HE BELIEVED THE BELGIANS MIGHT RECRUIT A SIMILAR NUMBER. HE NOTED THAT IT WAS NOT EASY TO RECRUIT MERCENARIES AT THIS TIME.

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3. THROUGHOUT THE CONVERSATION, JOURNIAC STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING MOBUTU IN POWER. THE FRENCH CAN SEE NO VIABLE ALTERNATIVE TO MOBUTU. FRENCH AFRICAN POLICY WOULD BE IN SHAMBLES IF HE WERE TO FALL AND BE REPLACED BY A PRO-SOVIET REGIME. THE FRENCH (AND THE WEST) WOULD LOSE ALL CREDIBILITY AND EVEN MODERATE AFRICANS WOULD TURN TO THE SOVIETS. JOURNIAC WAS CONVINCED THAT THE CURRENT CAMPAIGN IN ZAIRE WAS DIRECTED TOWARD BRINGING DOWN THE GOVERNMENT, AND NOT LIMITED TO A SEPARATIST ATTEMPT.

4. HABIB STATED THAT THE FRENCH ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS COINCIDE ALMOST EXACTLY WITH OUR OWN. HE EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT FAILURE OF ZAIRIAN TROOPS TO PUT UP ANY RESISTANCE WAS DISCOURAGING NOTING THAT WITHOUT SOME SIGN THAT ZAIRE WAS PREPARED TO FIGHT AGAINST THE INVADING FORCES, US SUPPORT WOULD BE WASTED. HOWEVER, DESPITE REPORTS CIRCULATING TO THE CONTRARY, THE US WAS NOT INTERESTED IN SEEING MOBUTU FALL, AND WOULD DO ALL THAT CONDITIONS MAKE POSSIBLE TO MAINTAIN INTEGRITY OF ZAIRE AND ITS GOVERNMENT. BECAUSE OF CONGRESSIONAL AND PUBLIC OPINION, HOWEVER, THE US CANNOT

TAKE THE LEAD BUT HOPES THAT THE FRENCH AND BELGIANS WILL BE ABLE TO DO SO, THUS PERMITTING THE US TO PROVIDE ITS OWN (NON-LETHAL) AID STEP BY STEP. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE US WOULD AND COULD HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH MERCENARIES.

HE WONDERED WHAT ELSE THE FRENCH INTENDED TO DO.

5. JOURNIAC SAID THAT IN ADDITION TO HELP WITH MERCENARIES, THE FRENCH INTEND TO SUGGEST TO MOBUTU THAT HE ASK MODERATE AFRICAN STATES TO PROVIDE SMALL FORCES AND TO ENCOURAGE FRANCE'S FRIENDS TO REPLY POSITIVELY TO SUCH REQUESTS.

IN THIS CONECTION, HE NOTED THAT A MOROCCAN ARMY TEAM IS NOW IN ZAIRE AND SAID THAT THE FRENCH BELIEVE THE MOROCCANS ARE DISPOSED TO SEND A SMALL FORCE. IF THE MOROCCANS DO ACT, THEN THE FRENCH WILL APPROACH OTHERS OF THEIR AFRICAN FRIENDS.

6. JOURNIAC INDICATED THAT THE FRENCH ARE SENDING 40
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OFFICERS AND NON-COMS TO GIVE OPERATIONAL SUPPORT AT THE REGIMENTAL LEVEL FOR FRENCH SUPPLIED EQUIPMENT. SUCH SUPPORT AT THE COMPANY LEVEL MIGHT EVENTUALLY BE GIVEN BY THE MERCENARIES. THE REQUEST FOR HELICOPTERS TROUBLES THE FRENCH, HE SAID, SINCE THEY DON'T HAVE MANY IN STOCK AND NEED THOSE FOR EVENTUAL USE IN DJBOUTI.

7. JOURNIAC URGED THAT THE US CONTINUE TO SUPPLY FIELD RATIONS FOR THE ARMY WHICH IS SHORT OF FOOD. HE AGAIN SUGGESTED THAT THE US PROVIDE AERIAL SUPPORT FOR SHIPMENTS FROM KINSHASA TO SHABA. HELICOPTERS, ESPECIALLY GUNSHIPS, WOULD BE USEFUL.

8. HABIB REPLIED THAT WE PROBABLY COULD CONTINUE TO SEND RATIONS AND THAT HE WOULD LOOK INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF SUPPLYING ANOTHER C-130 IF THERE APPEARS TO BE A NEED FOR IT, BUT STATED THAT HELICOPTER GUNSHIPS WOULD BE OUT OF THE QUESTION. HE SAID IT MIGHT BE USEFUL FOR BOTH THE FRENCH AND OURSELVES TO URGE THE ITALIANS TO PROVIDE MAINTENANCE SUPPORT FOR THE MACCHIS.

OM JOURNIAC APPEARED TO COMPREHEND THE DIFFICULTIES FOR THE US IN PLAYING A MORE ACTIVE ROLE AND EXPRESSED THE CLEAR FRENCH INTENTION TO CARRY THROUGH, INCLUDING HELP WITH THE MERCENARIES AND DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO SEND AFRICAN

TROOPS. HE INSISTED ON THE IMPORTANCE OF DEFENDING KOLWEZI, THE FALL OF WHICH WOULD BE EXTREMELY SERIOUS. A BATTALION OF MOROCCAN TROOPS OR A SMALL NUMBER OF MERCENARIES PROBABLY WOULD BE ABLE TO DEFEND THE CITY, HE SAID; WERE IT TO FALL, THE FIRST PRIORITY OF SUCH FORCES WOULD BE TO RETAKE IT.

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FINALLY, JOURNIAC SAID THAT GISCARD WOULD RAISE THE QUESTION FORCEFULLY DURING HIS MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY.

10. JOURNIAC HAD LITTLE FAITH IN POLITICAL OR DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM. HE SAW SOME VALUE IN KEEPING ALIVE THE NIGERIAN EFFORT AT MEDIATION BUT DID NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD GET ANYWHERE SO LONG AS THE INVADING FORCES WERE NOT EFFECTIVELY CHECKED.

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